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SUBJECT Eugene Tafoya

JOHN CHANCELLOR: There's a court trial going on in Colorado that has overtones of international secrecy and intrigue. The man on trial is named Eugene Tafoya, and he is accused of attempted murder and conspiracy. The trial testimony has included references to a hired mercenary, to the CIA, and to the government of Libya and its leader, Colonel Qaddafi.

We hear more from Fred Briggs.

FRED BRIGGS: This is Eugene Tafoya, ex-Green Beret, self-styled adventurer, and a man now on trial in the shooting of Libyan graduate student Faisal Zagalal (?) more than a year ago. It happened at Zagalal's apartment near Colorado State University. Zagalal was wounded. But he believes Tafoya was paid by the Libyan regime of Muammar Qaddafi to kill him. Zagalal had frequently criticized the Qaddafi regime.

Tafoya admits he was hired, but only to give a warning, not to kill. And he says it wasn't Libyans that hired him.

EUGENE TAFOYA: I was working for the CIA, to the best of my knowledge.

BRIGGS: The CIA denies it. But over all this looms the figure of Edwin Wilson, the former CIA agent, now living in Libya, who reportedly has trained Libyan terrorists.

Since Tafoya's trial began last week, courthouse security has been increased. Police heard rumors a hit man was being sent to silence Tafoya before he could take the stand.

In testifying for the prosecution, Zagalal told how

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Tafoya came to his apartment, passing himself off as a job interviewer, and then attacked him karate-style. Zagalai said he tried to ward off the blows, when Tafoya pulled a gun and shot him. But defense lawyer Walter Garrass (?) said Zagalai had a gun, too, under his sofa cushion. And Garrass tried to establish that Zagalai planned to use it. He reviewed Zagalai's testimony at an earlier hearing, in which Zagalai said, "During the struggle, I pulled out," and didn't finish the sentence.

A gun?

"No. By that," he said, "I meant I backed out of the fight."

The defense hopes to show Tafoya fired in self-defense.